Claim List

1.   (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for an on-line auction of the type wherein one or more customers may purchase a product supplied by one or more merchants, said method comprising the steps of:

acquiring, over a network, customer information from said one or more customers, said customer information including a Preferred Program Term selected from one or more Program Terms associated with said product;

automatically grouping said one or more customers into one or more pools in accordance with said selected Preferred Program Term, wherein said Preferred Program Term comprises indicia associated with the product;

receiving, over said network, bids from said one or more merchants in connection with the on-line auction of said product;

comparing said bids from said merchants to select a preferred bid from a preferred merchant;

notifying, over said network, said preferred merchant of said preferred bid.

2.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said grouping step includes grouping said customers via characteristic pooling in accordance with a Program Term associated with a characteristic of said customers.

3.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said grouping step includes grouping said customers via commitment pooling in accordance with a Program Term associated with the customers' level of commitment.

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4.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~said merchants~~ hypothetical

customers are grouped into ghost pools, and wherein said merchants bid on said ghost pools to

obtain the right to provide a previously agreed upon number of said customers with said product.

5.   (New) The method of claim 1, wherein said grouping step includes grouping said

customers into pools in accordance with the customers' predefined ranking of two or more

Program Terms.